

15 October 2019

 **Natural wonder of Children’s Week**
Rope swinging, tree climbing, hut building and mud-pie making – it’s all part of nature’s playground, which will feature in Children’s Week celebrations.

Surf Coast Shire Council is hosting various free events as part of Children’s Week, including teaming up with the YMCA Kids Go Bush program. Held Thursday 24 October at Anglesea Recreation Camp, the event will take advantage of the natural environment.

“It’s all about getting children and young people outside and active,” YMCA Kids Go Bush Nature Program Coordinator Elizabeth Haines said.

“Outdoor learning is proven to improve all aspects of early childhood development, and certainly strengthens a child’s physical development in building core strength as they swing on ropes, to balancing on the uneven ground or logs rather than a standardised playground.

“Children are smart and they’re going to do what their confidence level allows. They might only climb to a certain branch when they’re three years old but by the time they’re 10, they will climb the whole tree. It’s dynamic risk assessing – what branches can I stand on and how far should I go.”

The Anglesea Children’s Week event will consist of several stations to fascinate youngsters. It includes hut building, a mud kitchen and a loose parts station with items such as gum nuts. Pending weather, there will also be a fire to cook popcorn.

“We like to showcase the things we can do outside on natural equipment to get the most out of play,” Ms Haines said.

“We invite everyone to come along, from families with babies to older home-school students, as there will be age appropriate activities for all children.”

Children’s Week will be celebrated across the Surf Coast Shire with events in Deans Marsh (21 October), Moriac (22 October), Torquay (23 October), Anglesea (24 October) and Winchelsea (24 October). Lorne Kindergarten and Lorne Occasional Care are hosting their own event.

Mayor Rose Hodge encouraged families to get involved in Children’s Week.

“As well as nature play, there’s creative craft, storytime, sensory experiences, healthy snacks and so much more,” Cr Hodge said.

“It’s a fabulous opportunity to connect with other community members and enjoy our beautiful region with your young ones.”

The Children’s Week events are presented by Surf Coast Shire Council in partnership with the Department of Education and Training. Children’s Week is from 19 to 27 October. It is a national celebration of children’s rights, talents and citizenship.

Council has delivered the local events with the support of Early Years Reference Groups. For more information, visit [**www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/childrensweek**](http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/childrensweek).

**BREAKOUT PANEL**

**Celebrate Children’s Week in the Surf Coast Shire**

* **Deans Marsh** – Monday 21 October from 10am to 12.30pm at Pennyroyal Valley Road, park next to Deans Marsh Community Cottage.

A fun morning of games, craft, healthy snacks and more.

* **Moriac** – Tuesday 22 October from 11am to 12pm at Newling Reserve.

A fun morning of upcycled crafts, song and story time, sports and more.

* **Torquay** – Wednesday 23 October from 10am to 12pm at Elephant Walk Park.

A Welcome to Country, smoking ceremony and didgeridoo performance, followed by activities such as face painting, sensory experiences, story time and more.

* **Anglesea** – Thursday 24 October from 9.30am to 11.30am at Anglesea Recreation Camp.

Experience nature play, bush craft, mandala stones and more. Close-toed shoes required.

* **Winchelsea** – Thursday 24 October from 1pm to 3pm at 30 Hesse St, park next to Winchelsea Kindergarten
A fun afternoon of nature play, face painting and bush craft.

**Not for publication:**

**For further information**

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